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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to assess competencies for employability--preparing for, getting, keeping, and advancing in a job; where, in the public's opinion, such competencies should be taught; and where they are actually learned. National surveys of samples of the general adult public, public school teachers, high school seniors, and employers were conducted. Competencies dealing with traditional job values and expectations were perceived by the four response groups as being predominantly the responsibility of the home. Competencies relating to job advancement and promotion were perceived to be primarily the responsibility of the work place. The teaching of active worker behaviors concerning taking charge of oneself and getting ahead were assigned to the work place and the school, and the teaching of job search skills was seen as chiefly the responsibility of the school. Important findings suggest that the teaching of employability skills is perceived by the public, and by groups with vested interests in employability, as a shared responsibility of the schools, the home, and the work place. Also, where employability skills should be taught is not necessarily where they are actually learned. For the most part, they are learned on the job. (Author/KC)

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THE TEACHING OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

by

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1980

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FOREWORD

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, is continuing its programmatic research into the nature and application of occupational adaptability and transferable skills, a research program sponsored by the National Institute of Education. This report is one of a series that has been developed to aid educators in preparing today's youth and adults for careers characterized by change.

This study focused on answering questions concerning the teaching of employability skills. Findings that the responsibility for teaching functional competencies related to work and working are shared by the home, the school, and the employer are obtained from a national survey conducted by the National Center in spring 1979. This paper reports significant results of the study and their implications.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education wishes to express its appreciation to those persons contributing their expertise to the analysis of the study and review of the report. Recognition is especially due to Jolaine Scholl for her statistical assistance. The helpful advice of Dr. Carter Collins, Project Officer from the National Institute of Education is acknowledged. We also thank the external project reviewers--Ms. Joan Simon Jones, Decision Research Corporation; Mr. Robert Stump, private consultant; and Dr. Richard Ruff, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education--for their excellent reviews and suggestions. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. William Ashley, Director of the Occupational Adaptability and Transferable Skills Program, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Competencies for employability--preparing for, getting, keeping, and advancing in a job--were assessed for importance in doing well at work. Where, in the public's opinion, such competencies should be taught, and where they are actually learned, was also assessed. National surveys of samples of the general adult public, public school teachers, high school seniors, and employers were conducted in a project sponsored by the National Institute of Education at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University.

Competencies dealing with traditional job values and expectations were perceived by the four response groups as being predominately the responsibility of the home. Competencies relating to job advancement and promotion were perceived to be primarily the responsibility of the work place. The teaching of active worker behaviors concerning taking charge of oneself and getting ahead were assigned to the work place and the school, and the teaching of job search skills was seen as chiefly the responsibility of the school.

Important findings suggest that the teaching of employability skills is perceived by the public, and by groups with vested interests in employability, as a shared responsibility of the schools, the home, and the work place. Also, where employability skills should be taught is not necessarily where they are actually learned. For the most part, where they are learned is on the job.

INTRODUCTION

As the work force changes, as workers get older and jobs get fewer, as people change jobs at a faster rate, and as the nation focuses on youth employability, certain questions about employability need to be addressed. What competencies are associated with getting and keeping a job? How important are they for getting along in the world of work? Where do young people and people making mid-career changes acquire employability skills? Which competencies are best developed at home, in the school, or on the job? Is there a basis for sharing the responsibility in teaching competencies related to work and working?

Presented here are survey findings from a study of the general adult public, teachers, students, and employers concerning the teaching of employability skills and competencies in occupational adaptability. The study, funded by the National Institute of Education at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, is part of the Occupational Adaptability and Transferable Skills Program. Investigated were competencies related to employability and to good consumer practices.[1] This paper is a report of the public's opinion, as well as that of teachers, students and employers, on responsibility for the teaching of employability skills at home, in school, and on the job.

THE SURVEY

Employability--the ability to get, keep, and change jobs--consists of a number of separate factors: basic skills, work experience, work orientation, vocational skills, and job search skills.[2] The survey that serves as the foundation for this report sought to examine the specific competencies involved in employability. A questionnaire of thirty-nine ability items was developed through a search of literature, an examination of

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1. Initial survey findings were reported in a National Center publication by Selz, Jones, and Ashley entitled Functional Competencies for Adapting to the World of Work. An extensive treatment of the data for consumer-related competencies is presented in a National Center report by Selz and Coleman entitled In the Public's Opinion: Consumer Economic Competencies for Schools.

2. See 1980-1984 Area Plans for Youth Learning and Work, Program on Teaching and Learning, National Institute of Education, 1980.

numerous programs to prepare people for work, and the advice and consultation of educators and personnel in business and industry.

In spring of 1979, the Opinion Research Corporation, under subcontract to the National Center, gathered responses to this survey questionnaire from four different groups--the general public, kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers, employers, and eighteen-year-old high school students. Identical questions were asked of each sample group for the thirty-nine competencies. Concerning responsibility for teaching, the first question asked the respondents where they thought the competency should be taught. The second, relating to actuality, asked where it was actually learned.[3] Response options for both questions were: at home, in school, on the job, or elsewhere. The third question concerned the value or importance of the competency for doing well at work, and the response options were--do well, have some problems, or have a great deal of difficulty.

Additional survey information, including competencies for employability and consumer economics, is given in appendix A of this report.

Sample Description

For the reader's information, characteristics of the four samples, and the methods used for collecting data, are as follows.

General Adult Public

A random probability sample of 2,083 adults eighteen years of age and over in the continental United States who understand spoken English were interviewed at home by trained interviewers. The sample was proportional to the American population in terms of demographic characteristics and geographic distribution.

Teachers and Students

A random sample of schools nationwide was drawn. Of the schools contacted, 37 percent participated. Teachers in the sample crossed kindergarten through twelfth grade levels and were appointed by school personnel, as were classrooms of high school seniors, to participate in this study. The survey questionnaires were self-administering but otherwise identical to the adult public interview form. In all, 1,752 students and 978 teachers were counted in survey results.

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3. Henceforth, in this report, the first question is referred to as should and the second, actual.

Employers

Using the Standard Industrial Classification code, 200 places of employment were selected according to type of business/industry, size of company, and geographical region. Respondents were personnel officers, managers or supervisors, or business owners. The survey questionnaires were mailed to places of employment, and 107 completed forms were returned.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Data results in this report are descriptive and report quantitative differences in responses. Presented first is an overview of survey findings that shows the general pattern of response. For the most part, however, survey results are considered by data sets of competencies which are described later in this section. Significant differences are noted when such notations add clarity to the interpretation; technical points are consigned to footnotes.

Overview of Survey Findings

The average of how people responded to the different response options for all thirty-nine competencies was computed as an overview depicting the pattern of response for both responsibility and actuality of teaching and the perceived importance of the competencies. These average-percent responses are presented in tables 1 and 2.

When the highest ranking choice on where competencies should be taught is pinpointed, it is seen in table 1 that 40 percent of the adult population chose "job," and 41 percent of the teachers chose "school." Both students and employers split their choice between "school" and "job." In every case, the percent response for where competencies were actually learned is less than for where they should be taught in reference to "home" and "school," but more than for where they should be taught in reference to "job."

Teachers were more likely than other groups to assign responsibility for competencies to the school. Teachers and students were also more likely to think competencies are actually learned in school than were the adult and employer groups. Employers, on the other hand, were most likely to think competencies had been learned at work.

TABLE 1

TOTAL PERCENT RESPONSE ON RESPONSIBILITY
OF TEACHING AND ACTUALITY OF LEARNING COMPETENCIES

Groups	Questions	Home	School	Job	Elsewhere	Don't Know	Total
General Public	Should	22	27	40	7	4	100%
	Actual	14	22	50	8	6	100%
Teachers	Should	23	41	30	6	0	100%
	Actual	11	31	48	10	0	100%
Students	Should	24	35	31	10	0	100%
	Actual	17	30	41	12	0	100%
Employers	Should	24	35	35	6	0	100%
	Actual	12	21	56	11	0	100%

Several conclusions can be drawn from these observations. One is that the home and the school may not be attaining their perceived responsibility for teaching competencies related to employability. Another is that the responsibility for teaching employability skills is not the sole responsibility of the work place or of the school. The home, the school, and the work place share responsibility, and each has a role in preparing youth for the world of work.

As indicated by the relatively low percentages in the Elsewhere column in table 1, few persons considered it a viable response option. For this reason, "elsewhere" responses are omitted from subsequent data analyses.

The pattern of response concerning importance of the competencies for the four respondent groups is shown in table 2.

TABLE 2

TOTAL PERCENT RESPONSE ON IMPORTANCE

Groups	Do well	Have some problems	Have a great deal of diff.	Don't Know	Total
General Public	13	47	30	10	100%
Teachers	13	50	36	1	100%
Students	21	44	33	2	100%
Employers	17	52	29	2	100%

The percentages for the respondent groups suggest that one would have from some problems to a great deal of difficulty at work if one did not have employability skills and competencies. The exception is for students: 21 percent of the students sampled apparently think people can do well without such skills.

An observation from this information is that all competencies related to employability and occupational adaptability on this survey are relatively important for doing well at work. Although this list of competencies is not all-inclusive, it provides a valid starting point for teachers, parents, and employers concerned with teaching and preparing youth for successful employment.

Employability Skills: Competency Sets

The thirty-nine individual competencies were reduced to four sets of competencies.[4] In the analysis, competencies in employability and adaptability tended to cluster into recognizable sets having to do with accepting traditional job values, including using basic and vocational skills; advancing on the job, including abilities associated with work experience; taking charge, including work orientation behaviors; and finding one's place, including job search skills. The four sets are named and described as follows.[5]

Set I. "Doing what the man wants." These competencies pertain to traditional job values and expectations and include the following:

Have a good work attitude
Follow rules and policies

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4. Using responses of the general adult public on the importance question (third survey question), a factor analysis with oblique rotation resulted in four factors. The same four factors essentially reappeared in factor analysis for the sample subfiles. Thus, the items which contributed significantly to the factors for the general population on importance were formed into competency sets. These sets were used as the pattern for grouping competencies; actual responses were used in subsequent analyses.

5. I am indebted to the Technical Advisory Panel of the Occupational Adaptability and Transferable Skills Program--Dr. Ruth Nickse, Dr. Decker Walker, Mr. John Crystal, and Mr. Robert Stump--for the descriptive names given to the competency sets.

Follow job safety and health rules
Dress and act properly
Deal with pressures to get the job done
Get along with others
Work without supervision if necessary
Deal with unexpected things that happen
Use the tools and equipment a job calls for
Manage one's own time and activities
Get information about what is expected of you when starting a new job
Tell others what you are doing or want done
Use the reading, writing, and math skills the job calls for

Set II. "Getting yours." These competencies encompass behaviors relating to job advancement and promotion, knowing employee rights, and self-evaluation. They are as follows:

Understand the extras or benefits offered at work
Understand wages and deductions on one's paycheck or stub
Figure out the cost of using one's own car or public transportation in getting to and from work
Ask for a raise in salary
Decide how and when to leave a job for another job
Use what one already knows to do a new or different job
Get promoted on the job
Manage one's own time and activities
Learn new job skills to get a different job or position
Know when one's own work is being done well
Be a member of a union or professional group
Know one's rights as an employee

Set III. "Taking charge." Competencies on this set relate to active behaviors on the part of the worker and include these items:

Do things at work in a new way when one gets the chance
Take chances that may result in rewards
Get support from others to change things that need changing on the job
Figure out a better way to get things done
Persuade others to one's way of thinking
Be a member of a union or professional group
Know one's rights as an employee

Use materials and the knowledge of other people to develop one's job interests
Interview for different job positions when necessary
Know where to look for information about jobs one has or would like to have
Tell others what you are doing or what you want done

Set IV. "Finding your niche." This set is described by job search skills and general job preparation activities and include these items:

Hold a job that matches one's interests and abilities
Get a job for which one has the training and background
Know if one wants to own a business or work for someone else
Know what kind of work one wants to do
Use reading, writing, and math skills the job calls for
Know where to look for information about jobs one has or would like to have
List job interests, skills, and experiences for an employer
Interview for different job positions when necessary
Fill out forms as required by law or by an employer
Do parts of the job one may not like to do

The competency sets described above are skills and abilities encompassing employability. They are sets of competencies (comprehensive yet not all-inclusive) that are associated with getting and keeping jobs. They are abilities--as well as knowledge and attitudes--that are the responsibility of the home, the school, and the work place to teach.

Summary Results for the Competency Sets

Presented in this section are survey findings by competency set relating to responsibility (defined as where competencies should be taught), actuality (where they are learned), and importance (how well one could do without the competency). Considered germane to this report and included in the discussion are teachers' perceptions of competencies that should be taught in school and employers' opinions of employability competencies important to doing well at work.

Shared Responsibility

A count of the number of competencies in each set of where they should be taught and where they were actually learned affords the overall pattern depicted below.

		Groups			
Set	Questions	General Public	Teachers	Students	Employers
"Doing what the man wants"	Should	Home	Home	Home	Home
	Actual	Job	Job	Job	Job
"Getting yours"	Should	Job	Job	Job	Job
	Actual	Job	Job	Job	Job
"Taking charge"	Should	Job	School	School	School
	Actual	Job	Job	Job	Job
"Finding your niche"	Should	School	School	School	School
	Actual	Job	School /Job	School /Job	Job

The overwhelming opinion of most respondents is that the sets of competencies are actually learned on the job. The only exception to this is the view of teachers and students that learning to find one's niche is just as likely to happen in school as on the job.

However, in one case, "Getting yours," the work place was seen as the place where people should be taught the competencies, as well as where they actually learn them. The set of competencies having to do with attitudes, interpersonal relations, and self-management, "Doing what the man wants," was perceived as the home's responsibility, and the set involving promotion and advancement, "Getting yours," as the work places'. As far as being innovative, persuasive and taking risks to do a better job, "Taking charge," the employers, students, and teachers agreed that these competencies should be taught in school. The general public saw them being taught on the job. All four groups thought that the competencies of preparing for the job and finding the one for you, "Finding your niche," should be taught in school.

Based on this finding are the following two points. First, where some competencies should be taught is not where they are actually learned. However, this survey does not allow for an examination of interesting questions such as whether or not some of the competencies really can be learned in particular settings before one experiences the world of work.

Second, and more clearly, the preparation for the world of work is seen as a joint responsibility of those in the school, at home, and on the job. All these have a vital role to play in teaching the competencies needed for employability.

This sense of shared responsibility is reinforced by an examination of the relative strength of these preferences. An index that indicates this strength was calculated.[6] The index has a maximum of ten. As seen in the following charts, seldom is the index above five, indicating that the sense of responsibility is dispersed across the response options of home, school, and job. Note that the preceding chart presents the predominant preference within each competency set. A closer examination reveals differences among the three groups of respondents that may have an impact on how these groups might view themselves as working together.

Set I. "Doing what the man wants"

		Groups			
Questions	Locations	General Public	Students	Teachers	Employers
Should	1 Home	3.8	3.6	4.2	4.3
	2 School	2.2	2.9	3.3	2.8
	3 Job	3.3	2.7	2.2	2.8
Actual	1 Home	2.7	2.6	2.0	2.3
	2 School	2.2	3.0	3.5	2.1
	3 Job	4.2	3.5	3.8	5.2

This chart shows the unanimous opinion that home is the first choice as the place where these competencies should be taught. The second choice, however, differs. The general public says on the job; teachers and students say in school; and employers are evenly split between school and job.

Where competencies on traditional job values should be taught appears unanimously to be the home. The second choice differs for each group--the general public says on the job, students and employers are divided between school and job, and teachers say in school. On the job is where most of these competencies are actually learned.

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6. The average number of competencies per set that respondents thought should be taught at home was computed. This computation was repeated for all locations on both questions. The index was derived in this way: mean divided by the number of items per set times ten.

While all groups think the home is not meeting its perceived responsibility (as indicated by the low index score in the actual-home row), teachers are more likely than the others to think that the school is perhaps attending to what is not occurring in the home. Since this competency set was perceived by all groups as very important to doing well at work, it may well be that the school can aid in or pick up on the development of good work attitudes, learning to dress and act properly, and skills in getting along with others.

In reference to actually learned at school responses, the difference between scores for students (3.0) and employers (2.1) may indicate that students think they have more employability skills than employers give them credit for. This difference in perception (while understandable) may well be an impediment to the hiring of youth for responsible jobs.

Set II. "Getting yours"

		Groups			
Questions	Locations	General Public	Students	Teachers	Employers
Should	1 Home	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.4
	2 School	2.1	2.9	3.3	2.8
	3 Job	5.3	3.9	4.3	5.0
Actual	1 Home	1.0	1.4	0.7	0.6
	2 School	1.5	2.4	2.3	1.2
	3 Job	6.1	4.9	5.9	7.0

Given that this set deals with on-the-job types of behavior (getting promoted, understanding extras and benefits, and the like), it makes sense that there is unanimous assent that these competencies should be taught and are actually learned at work.

That the groups perceive little role for the school and even less for home in teaching these competencies is understandable. However, students and teachers think the school is the place, more so than it actually is, to teach the following competencies:

- Figure out the cost of using one's own car or public transportation in getting to and from work
- Understand wages and deductions on one's paycheck
- Know when one's work is being done well
- Manage one's own time and activities

Set III. "Taking charge"

Questions	Locations	Groups: General Public	Students	Teachers	Employers
Should	1 Home	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.4
	2 School	2.8	3.8	4.7	4.2
	3 Job	4.2	3.0	2.8	3.5
Actual	1 Home	0.9	1.3	0.8	0.7
	2 School	2.1	3.2	3.1	1.8
	3 Job	5.1	3.8	4.6	5.8

Although the emphasis is on school for students, teachers, and employers, the general public thinks more of the competencies dealing with active job behaviors should be taught on the job. Teachers, students, and employers, given the relatively high indexes for should be taught on the job, perceive that the teaching of these competencies should be shared between the work place and school. The large index scores in the Actual Job row indicate that many of these competencies are actually being learned at work and that employers are most likely to think the competencies are learned on the job.

Competencies which appear to be learned primarily in school and on the job are as follows:

- Get support from others to change things that need changing on the job
- Do things at work in a new way when one gets the chance
- Figure out a better way to get things done
- Tell others what you are doing or want done
- Take chances that may result in rewards
- Persuade others to one's way of thinking

Set IV: "Finding your own niche"

Questions	Locations	Groups: General Public	Students	Teachers	Employers
Should	1 Home	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.0
	2 School	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.7
	3 Job	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.5
Actual	1 Home	1.0	1.2	0.9	0.7
	2 School	2.2	1.9	2.3	1.7
	3 Job	2.3	1.9	2.1	1.9

The competencies in this set have to do with job preparation and job search skills. The lowness and consistency of size of the index scores shows that there is no strong preference regarding responsibility. However, there is a slight preference for teaching these competencies in school. Regarding where they were actually learned, teachers were more likely than the other groups to think these competencies are actually being learned in school.

As teachers have a vested interest in competencies which are the responsibility of the school to teach, further examination is indicated. To this end, where schools might potentially contribute in the teaching of specific competencies is discussed. An indication of where the responsibility for each competency as perceived by teachers and the other respondent groups is given for the readers' information in appendix B.

Teachers' Perception of Schools' Potential Contribution. A high discrepancy between the extent to which competencies should be taught in school and the extent to which they are perceived to be learned in school is likely to indicate where schools might assume more responsibility for teaching. Presented below are some such competencies.[7]

Competencies	Discrepancy Score
Interview for different job positions when necessary	37%
Fill out forms as required by law or employers	34%
Hold a job that matches one's interests and abilities	33%
Understand wages and deductions on one's paycheck	32%
Know what kind of work one wants to do	30%
Get a job for which one has the training and background	29%
List job skills and experience for an employer	25%
Know where to look for information about jobs one has or would like to have	22%
Know one's rights as an employee	18%
Get information about what is expected of you when starting a new job	17%
Use materials and the knowledge of others to develop one's job interests	17%

7. Competencies of greatest discrepancy, where disagreement is $\geq$ 17 percent, are listed regardless of competency set. The discrepancy score is obtained by subtracting the total percent response of where teachers said the competency is actually being learned from the total percent response of where they thought the competency should be taught.

Among the skills reflected in these competencies are basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic; comprehension and problem solving, including use of information-getting skills; and knowing one's interests and abilities. Activities using these skills are likely to be encountered in school settings. These underlying skills, being generic in nature, are conceivably not restricted to specific course content but may cross subject matter and grade levels.

On the other hand, the competencies listed above could conceivably be contained in career preparation or vocational education courses, as a look at the content shows these competencies deal mostly with job preparation and job search skills. At any rate, preparing for and looking for a job falls into the instructional framework of most secondary schools.

Of interest to this discussion are those competencies teachers think the school is teaching to a greater extent than is its responsibility.[8] Those competencies that teachers feel the school is picking up on that should be learned at home are as follows.

Competencies	Discrepancy Score
Get along with others	- 18%
Dress and act properly	- 15%
Follow rules and policies	- 15%
Manage one's own time and activities	- 15%
Know when one's work is being done well	- 12%
Have a good work attitude	- 10%

Differences in Importance Among Respondent Groups

Analysis was performed for examining significant differences among the general public, students, employers, and teachers on perception of importance of each competency set.[9] Some of the differences between groups were statistically significant, as indicated by the X's in the following grid.

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8. This is the reverse of the preceding situation. Here the percent response for where the competency is learned is greater than for where it should be taught.

9. Significant differences at .05 level were obtained using the Scheffé post hoc contrast test following a one-way analysis of variance.

Sets	Groups	General Public	Students
Doing what the man wants	Students		
	Employers	X	X
	Teachers	X	X
Getting yours	Students	X	
	Employers		X
	Teachers	X	
Taking charge	Students	X	
	Employers		
	Teachers	X	
Finding your niche	Students	X	
	Employers	X	
	Teachers	X	X

For "Doing what the man wants," employers and teachers differed significantly from the general public and students. For the other three sets, students and teachers differed significantly from the general public. In addition, employers differed from students in "Getting yours" and from the general public on "Finding your niche." Teachers differed with students on the importance of competencies in "Finding your niche." In summary, the most consistent pattern is that teachers and students seem to differ in response from the general public on perceptions of importance.

How important the respondent groups perceive the competency sets, as depicted by group mean scores, is shown in the following chart.[10]

	Groups			
Sets	General Public	Students	Employers	Teachers
Doing what the man wants	28.7	29.1	31.8	32.3
Finding your niche	23.3	24.1	24.7	26.0
Taking charge	22.5	23.8	23.2	24.1
Getting yours	21.8	23.6	21.7	23.5

The competency set rated highest in importance by all respondent groups is "Doing what the man wants." Competencies in

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10. As there are thirteen items in the set counted against a three point scale [13 items x 1 (do well) = 13, and 13 x 3 (great deal of difficulty) = 39], the possible range of scores is thirteen to thirty-nine.

this set relate to traditional job values in keeping a job. The set rated lowest in importance by all respondent groups was "Getting yours," a set dealing with job advancement behaviors.

Teachers were more likely than the general public, students, or employers to think all competency sets were important. An exception is that students agreed with the relative importance of the set, "Getting yours."

In summary, the finding that all competencies in the survey are important is supported. The lowest mean score (21.7) is within three points of the median (Mdn = 25) and the highest mean (32.3) approaches the maximum score.

Competency sets were perceived by employers to be learned on the job to a great extent and employers differed from the general public and students in several instances on the importance of competencies. This prompts us to examine further what competencies employers think important for doing well at work. This information is presented in the following discussion.

Employers' Perception of Competencies' Importance. Of the 107 employment places participating, about three quarters of the respondents (personnel officers, managers, and owners) thought an employee would have a great deal of difficulty without basic skills, the ability to get along with others, and job-specific skills. Traditionally, basic skills are learned in school, getting along with others at home, and job-specific skills either in vocational training or on the job. The perception of these three as the most important skills supports the finding that the teaching of employability skills is a shared responsibility.

Of all the competencies (regardless of set) in the survey, those that employers considered the most and least important are the following.

Most Important	% Response	Least Important	% Response
Using basic skills	77%	Figuring transportation costs	48%
Getting along with others	73	Joing a union or professional group	46
Having job-specific skills	71	Understanding wages and deductions	43
Dealing with job pressure	55	Understanding extras and benefits	42
		Asking for a raise	40

Total percent responses for "do well" are the percentages recorded for least important, and total percent responses for "have a great deal of difficulty" are the percentages recorded for most important. Although almost half of the employers responding considered the five competencies given above to be least important in doing well at work, there is no indication that these competencies are considered unimportant by employers. Conceivably, one could perform well regarding job duties without, for instance, knowing anything about extras and benefits of the job.

VIEWPOINT

In the public's opinion, all competencies associated with work or working are considered important to doing well at work. This perceived importance may translate not only as the convenience or luxury of getting, keeping, or changing jobs, but also as a basic survival skill.

For the most part, these important skills and abilities needed for getting and keeping jobs are being learned on the job. We, therefore, must ask whether employers are equipped to deal with this or whether the acquisition of employability skills may be better effected elsewhere.

All youth do not make a successful transition into the adult work world. The socioeconomically disadvantaged young--whether white, black, Hispanic, male or female--face almost impenetrable employability barriers. Employers are not likely to hire these young people. The reasons they give range from lack of specific job skills, basic skills, and bad work attitudes, to unreliability, immaturity, and irresponsibility.

If the home and school are not taking responsibility for the teaching of employability skills (including job-specific and basic skills, good work attitudes, and indications of maturity and responsibility such as working without supervision, following rules and policies, and so forth), it may well be that these skills are simply not being learned by whole segments of American youth. If skills are learned on the job instead of at home and in school, and if one has no job, the question of where or when competencies in occupational adaptability and employability skills are learned remains.

This is the Catch-22 faced by many poor and minority young people today, and on which billions of public dollars are being spent. The impact of this report is not to restate this fact. Rather what is being illustrated is a particular dimension of the issue at hand. The development of employability competencies is

the joint responsibility of the home, the school and employers. For this responsibility to be met, the three sectors must work together. Relying on the work place as the learning place of last resort may result in large segments of our population not learning. To ensure this cooperation, employers, parents, and teachers need to examine the fuller dimensions of employability (the range of essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes) and the opportunities each has to contribute to the young person's learning.

This study is one piece of the research that needs to be done in the employability arena. It has resulted in some findings which can serve as a basis for dialogue between employers and teachers. It has suggested some idea of the roles of school, home, and work place in the teaching of skills and competencies. It has revealed perceptions of the importance of specific competencies for doing well at work, which can serve as guidelines for those interested in developing these competencies for job entry or promotional positions.

Further studies will be necessary to investigate the relationship of basic skills both to the attainment of employability skills and to ultimate success in the job market. How intervention strategies can be best employed--by the home, the school, and the work place--needs examination. Not only must instructional strategies be developed, so must strategies and vehicles for awareness. Young people should know what employability skills are required, which skills they have or need, and how to use them to take as much personal control of their lives as is possible.

APPENDIX A

THE SURVEY AND SAMPLES

For the surveys on occupational adaptability and consumer economics the questions were similar for all samples of people. The survey participants, the total number per sample, and the proportional demographic characteristics expressed in percentages for each sample are shown in table 1 of this appendix.

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLES

General Public		% Occupational Adaptability	% Consumer Economics
Total Number		(2083)	(2054)
Region	East	26%	24%
	North Central	28	29
	South	32	30
	West	14	17
Race	White	88	90
	Nonwhite	12	10
Sex	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
Age	18-29	27	30
	30-44	28	30
	45-59	20	20
	60 or older	24	20
Education	Total high school	60	62
	Total college	40	48
Occupation	Executive, managerial	20	17
	White collar	24	28
	Blue collar	34	35
	Retired	20	18
Income	Under $7,000	16	13
	$7,000-9,999	13	11
	$10,000-14,999	15	15
	$15,000-24,999	30	36
	$25,000 and over	20	22

Teachers		% Occupational Adaptability
Total number		(978)
Region	East	25%
	North Central	24
	South	35
	West	16
Race	White	83
	Nonwhite	17
Age	30 years or younger	24
	31-40	34
	41 or older	40
Grades Taught	K-6 7-8 9-12	28
	Mixed	19
		39
Years Teaching	10 years or less	14
	11-20	45
	21 or more	34
		19

Students		% Occupational Adaptability
Total number		(1752)
Region	East	19%
	North Central	27
	South	36
	West	18
Race	White	72
	Nonwhite	28
Sex	Male	45
	Female	55
Classification	College Prep.	31
	General	38
	Voc/Business	15
	Combination	16
Employment	No job	12
	1-3 jobs	66
	4 or more jobs	21

Employers		% Occupational Adaptability
Total number		(107)
Region	East	23%
	North Central	27
	South	26
	West	23
Type	Manufacturing	38
	Construction	7
	Transportation	3
	Communications, Utilities	5
	Trade	13
	Agriculture, Forestry	7
	Mining	6
	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	10
	Research, Services	5
Size	1-49 Employees	22
	50-99	19
	100-599	24
	500-999	11
	1,000 or more	24

There were three main questions. Participants responded to all three questions for each ability. The abilities were presented one after another. For the general adult samples, the questions and answers were given orally. The three other samples were required to read the questions, the abilities referred to, and circle their answers.

The lead-in statement, questions on the survey, and ability statements are given in tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2

QUESTIONS AND ITEMS FOR OCCUPATIONAL ADAPTABILITY SURVEY

In looking at each ability, please tell me, first, where you feel this should be taught. Second, realizing that different people learn things in various places, where do you feel most people actually learn each ability? Finally, how well do you think a person would do at work if he or she did not have this ability?

Where should a person be taught this (most important place)?
1. At home
2. In school (any level)
3. On the job
4. Somewhere else (not listed above)

Where do most people actually learn this?
1. At home
2. In school (any level)
3. On the job
4. Somewhere else (not listed above)

If a person did not have this ability, how well would he/she do at work?
1. Do well at work
2. Have some problems at work
3. Have a great deal of difficulty at work

To be able to . . .

1. Know what kind of work one wants to do
2. Hold a job that matches one's interests and abilities
3. Get a job for which one has the training and background
4. Know if one wants to own a business or work for someone else
5. Use the reading, writing and math skills the job calls for
6. Get along with others
7. Use the tools and equipment a job calls for
8. Do parts of the job one may not like to do
9. Know where to look for information about jobs one has or would like to have
10. List job interests, skills and experience for an employer
11. Interview for different job positions when necessary
12. Fill out forms as required by law or by an employer
13. Get information about what is expected of you when starting a new job
14. Dress and act properly
15. Have a good work attitude
16. Deal with pressures to get the job done
17. Tell others what you are doing or what you want done
18. Work without supervision, if necessary
19. Figure out a better way to get things done
20. Get support from others to change things that need changing on the job
21. Do things at work in a new way when one gets the chance
22. Take chances that may result in rewards
23. Follow job safety and health rules
24. Deal with unexpected things that happen
25. Know one's rights as an employee
26. Follow rules and policies
27. Be a member of a union or professional group
28. Persuade others to one's way of thinking
29. Use materials and the knowledge of other people to develop one's job interests
30. Know when one's own work is being done well
31. Learn new job skills to get a different job or position
32. Get promoted on the job
33. Ask for a raise in salary
34. Decide how and when to leave a job for another job
35. Use what one already knows to do a new or different job
36. Manage one's own time and activities
37. Understand wages and deductions on one's paycheck or stub
38. Understand the extras or benefits offered at work
39. Figure out the cost of using one's own car or public transportation in getting to and from work

TABLE 3

QUESTIONS AND ITEMS FOR CONSUMER ECONOMICS SURVEY

In looking at each ability, please tell me, first, where or how you feel you should be taught this. Second, please tell me where or how you actually learned it. Finally, how well do you think you would do in life if you did not have this ability?

Where should you be taught this?

1. At home
2. In school (any level)
3. At work
4. Self-taught

Where did you actually learn this?

1. At home
2. In school (any level)
3. At work
4. Self-taught

If you did not know how to do this, how well would you get along in life?

1. Get along well
2. Have some problems
3. Have a great deal of difficulty

Know how to . . .

1. Make change using bills and coins
2. Write a check or fill out a money order
3. Add the total cost (plus tax) of a purchase
4. Decide if a more expensive item is worth the extra cost
5. Balance a checkbook
6. Shop around for the kind of savings plan that meets your needs
7. Decide what gives you the best return (or profit) on your money, if you want to save money
8. Apply for credit cards (gas, department store, Master Charge, etc.)
9. Manage money so that you can pay your bills
10. Keep records and receipts to file income tax forms
11. Prepare and stick to a budget
12. Understand how changes in the economy make a difference in how much you have to spend
13. Understand how the price of gasoline and other resources is changed as supplies are used up
14. Decide which purchases you make are necessary and which are not
15. Decide if you should pay cash or charge what you buy
16. Find stores that have the best bargains
17. Find out about the quality of what you are buying before you buy it
18. Decide which item is the best buy, based on unit prices given at the store
19. Establish a credit rating
20. Borrow money in the easiest and best way, if you need to borrow
21. Get a personal loan from a bank, if you need a loan
22. Get a mortgage on a house
23. Finance something at a store or dealer (like a car, TV, stereo)
24. Get your utilities turned on or off, if you need to
25. Get the electric or phone company to fix something if it is not working
26. Get the right kind of insurance coverage
27. Take good care of your belongings or property
28. Have something fixed using the warranty
29. Fix things when they break or tear
30. Decide between selling something large yourself, such as a house or car, or having someone else sell it for you
31. Find the right person to sell something for you
32. Order things from a catalog
33. Decide between renting or buying things you may not need very often
34. Rent an office or a place to live
35. Recognize false advertising when you see it
36. Make the right decisions about buying things that are advertised to make you want them
37. Get help if you have problems with your purchases
38. Get your money back if the item you bought is not well made or does not work well
39. Be able to tell when you are not getting satisfactory service (like from doctors, lawyers, mechanics, etc.)
40. Complain about poor service to the right person

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATIONAL ADAPTABILITY COMPETENCIES
FOR RESPONSIBILITY OF TEACHING ON FOUR SAMPLES

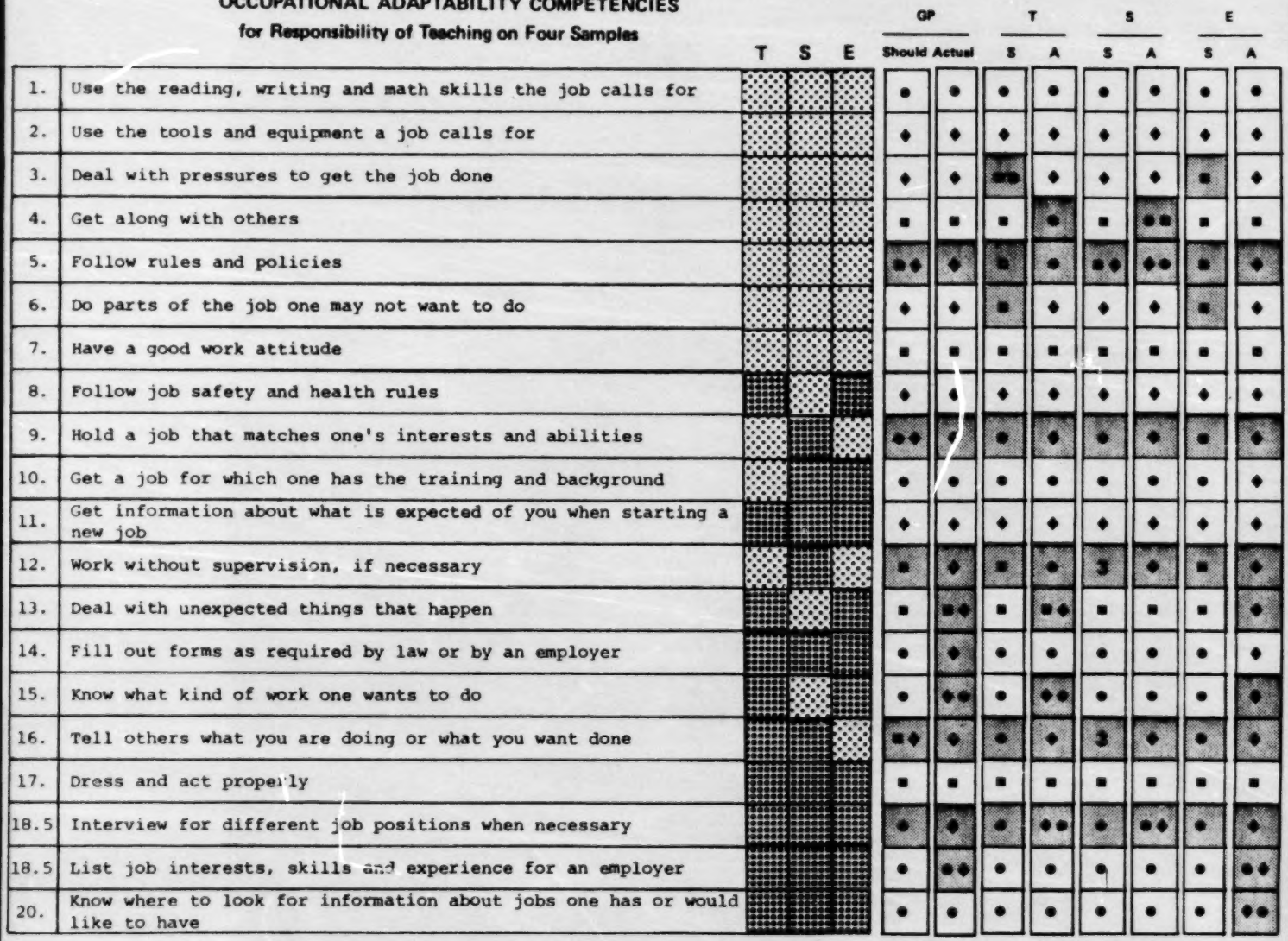
Instructions

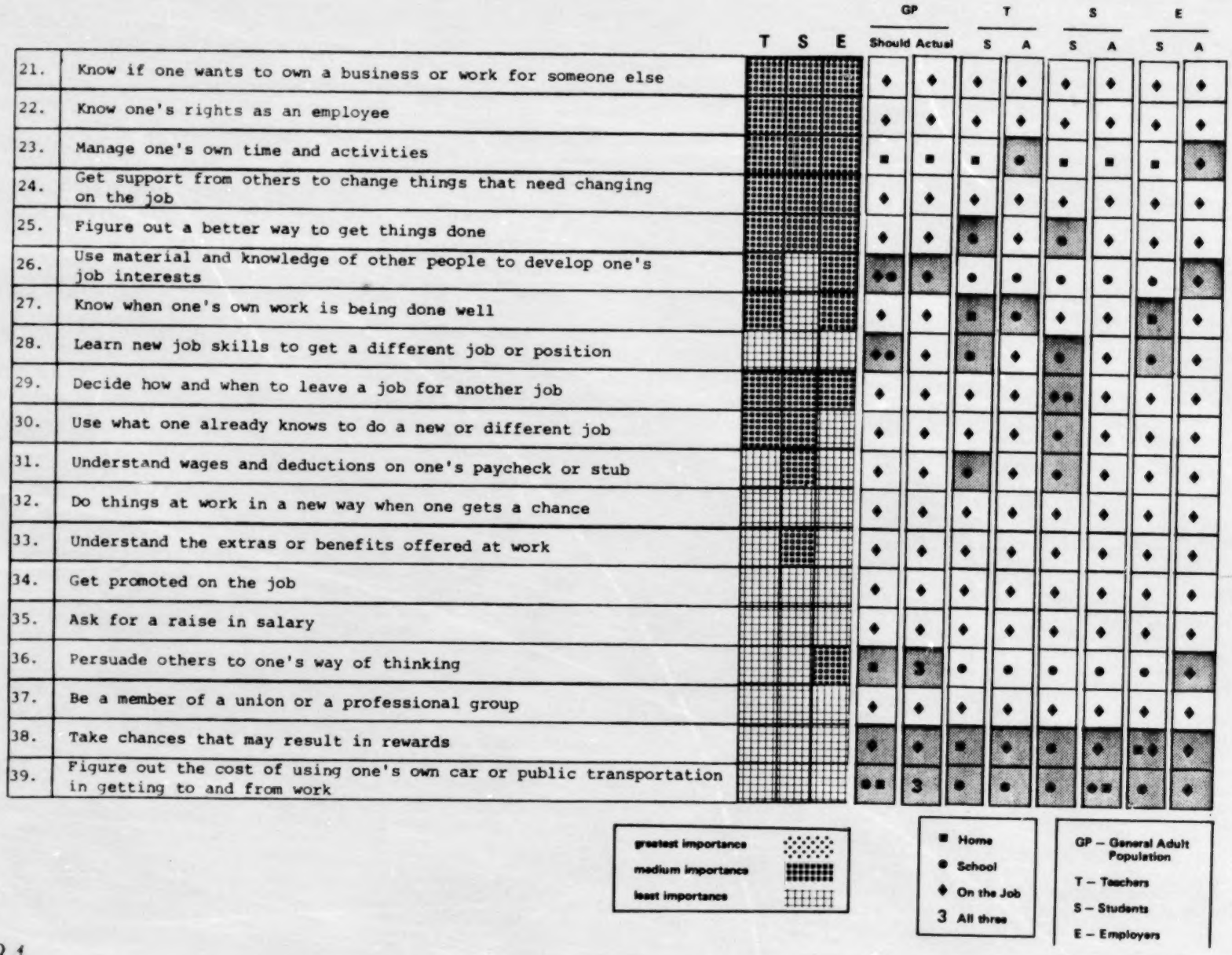
The competencies are listed in order of importance, where ranking is on the basis of highest to lowest mean score per competency for the adult public. In the first columns to the right of the listing are indications of which are the ten highest ranking, middle, and ten lowest ranking competencies for Teachers (T), Students (S), and Employers (E) (see the table key). As can be seen, the four samples, referred to in the text of the report as respondent groups, were fairly consistent in the ranking of competencies on importance.

In the next set of columns, characterized by symbols--where the square refers to "at home," the circle to "in school," and the diamond to "on the job" as shown in the key--are representations of the majority response of where the competency should (S) be taught and is actually (A) learned. This information is given for the General Public (GP), Teachers (T), Students (S), and Employers (E). The shaded areas in these columns indicate competencies for which there is disagreement across sample groups on response options.

OCCUPATIONAL ADAPTABILITY COMPETENCIES

for Responsibility of Teaching on Four Samples


T S E
GP
Should Actual
T
S A
S
S A
E
S A
1. Use the reading, writing and math skills the job calls for
2. Use the tools and equipment a job calls for
3. Deal with pressures to get the job done
4. Get along with others
5. Follow rules and policies
6. Do parts of the job one may not want to do
7. Have a good work attitude
8. Follow job safety and health rules
9. Hold a job that matches one's interests and abilities
10. Get a job for which one has the training and background
11. Get information about what is expected of you when starting a new job
12. Work without supervision, if necessary
13. Deal with unexpected things that happen
14. Fill out forms as required by law or by an employer
15. Know what kind of work one wants to do
16. Tell others what you are doing or what you want done
17. Dress and act properly
18.5 Interview for different job positions when necessary
18.5 List job interests, skills and experience for an employer
20. Know where to look for information about jobs one has or would like to have


GP
T
S
E
Should Actual
S A S A S A S A
T S E
21. Know if one wants to own a business or work for someone else
22. Know one's rights as an employee
23. Manage one's own time and activities
24. Get support from others to change things that need changing on the job
25. Figure out a better way to get things done
26. Use material and knowledge of other people to develop one's job interests
27. Know when one's own work is being done well
28. Learn new job skills to get a different job or position
29. Decide how and when to leave a job for another job
30. Use what one already knows to do a new or different job
31. Understand wages and deductions on one's paycheck or stub
32. Do things at work in a new way when one gets a chance
33. Understand the extras or benefits offered at work
34. Get promoted on the job
35. Ask for a raise in salary
36. Persuade others to one's way of thinking
37. Be a member of a union or a professional group
38. Take chances that may result in rewards
39. Figure out the cost of using one's own car or public transportation in getting to and from work
greatest importance
medium importance
least importance
Home
School
On the Job
3 All three
GP – General Adult Population
T – Teachers
S – Students
E – Employers